

Introduction to Criminology – SOCI 211S

Autumn 2015

M-W-F, 11:10 am – Noon, Social Sciences 356

Instructor Information

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Teaching Assistant

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Course Overview

In this course, we will survey many of the major issues in criminology, including the nature of crime, causes of crime, and societal reaction to crime. In the first section of the course, we will examine how crime is measured, who commits crime, as well as discuss why certain types of behaviors are considered “criminal.” We will also discuss characteristics of major categories of crime, including property crime, violent crime, victimless crime, and white-collar crime. In the second section of the course, we will focus on the causes of crime. Here, we will study several theories of crime, comparing evidence between the theories and applying the theories to real-life events. Finally, we will briefly discuss the criminal justice system and efforts to control crime. Throughout the course, you will be encouraged to think critically and to weigh the evidence for and against various perspectives. In this way, the ultimate goal for the course is to provide you with the necessary tools to understand the complex issues of crime, as well as to evaluate crime-control strategies.

The syllabus is a general plan for the course. Deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Required Readings:

Crime Profiles: The Anatomy of Dangerous Persons, Places, and Situations (3rd edition) by Terrance Miethe, Richard McCorkle, & Shelly Listwan.

Criminological Theories: Introduction, Evaluation, and Application (6th Edition) by Ronald Akers & Christine Sellers.

Several additional readings will be available online on Moodle.

You are expected to complete the assigned readings before class each day. The readings establish the foundation for the lectures and class discussions, so do not expect to be taught the information that appears in the readings during class. Instead, our in-class time will be spent going beyond the readings.

Course Requirements

Three Exams

You will have three exams, each worth 25% of your grade. Exams focus upon (and therefore you are responsible for knowing) material presented in the readings and in class. No exam, including the “final,” is cumulative in the traditional sense. It is impossible, however, to avoid concepts and material presented in earlier units as the semester unfolds. Exam dates are indicated on the course outline.

Quizzes and In-Class Activities

In addition to the exams, you will also have periodic quizzes and in-class exercises/group activities. These will account for the remaining 25% of your grade. The quizzes will assess your comprehension of the assigned readings and will be given within the first 5 minutes of class. If you arrive late or are absent for **any** reason, you will be unable to make-up that day’s quiz. There will be approximately 6 to 10 of these reading quizzes. We will also have several in-class group activities. They will be graded in terms of “pass/fail” (either you do it or you don’t); consequently, if you aren’t in class on the day of a given assignment, there will be no way to make-up the points. If you show up late or leave early during a day in which we have a quiz or activity, you will not receive credit for that quiz or activity. I will drop your **two** lowest quiz/activity grades.

Grading

Course grades will be based on the following:

Quiz/Activity	25%
Exam 1	25%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%
Total	100%

Final grades for the course are based on the following scale:

Letter Grade	Number Grade
A	93 to 100
A-	90 to 92.99
B+	88 to 89.99
B	83 to 87.99
B-	80 to 82.99
C+	78 to 79.99
C	73 to 77.99
C-	70 to 72.99
D+	68 to 69.99
D	63 to 67.99
D-	60 to 62.99
F	59.99 and below

Course grades are not rounded up to the next letter grade.

Class Participation and Attendance

While I have no official attendance requirement, I strongly encourage you to attend all class sessions. And, because this class will emphasize class discussion, it is important that you come to class prepared to discuss the readings. Students who attend regularly and participate in class discussions tend to perform better on exams than those who do not. We will also have in-class exercises and quizzes that you will not be able to make-up.

You should be aware that we will discuss a number of subjects that you may find controversial. In all of our class discussions, you will be expected to be respectful toward your classmates, despite any disagreement you may have with a classmate's ideas. In this way, we will foster an atmosphere in which each student feels comfortable presenting his or her thoughts, as well as critiquing the arguments presented by others. You should not worry that your grade will be affected if you express opinions different from what you perceive the professor's opinions to be. Instead, focus upon using evidence and logic to present your own arguments and in critiquing the arguments of others. In following these ground rules, I expect our discussion to be lively, interesting, and intellectually challenging.

Classroom Courtesy

Please plan to arrive on time for all class sessions and to stay for the entire class. If you **must** arrive late or leave early, please notify me in advance and sit near the door so as not to disturb your classmates. Cell phones should be turned off before entering the classroom. When class begins, please put away all other materials. Laptops may not be used unless you have a documented disability that requires the use of a laptop, as these devices are distracting for other students. Finally, wait until the end of class before putting away your books.

Make-Up Exam Policy

Make-up exams will be given at the instructor's discretion. The only times in which a make-up exam will be considered are when the student experiences a serious illness or family situation that prevents him or her from being physically present during the exam. Note that a broken alarm clock, cold, out-of-town event, etc. will **NOT** merit a make-up. Please understand that offering a false rationale for a make-up exam is an act of academic dishonesty and amounts to cheating on an exam. In all cases, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor to request a make-up. The failure of the student to request the make-up within 24 hours of the missed exam will be sufficient cause for the professor to deny the request. If the request is denied, then a score of zero is entered for that exam. If the instructor elects to permit a make-up, then the format of the make-up exam may vary from the original exam and must be taken as soon after the missed exam as possible.

Academic Honesty

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. A few examples of academic dishonesty are copying answers from another student during an exam or

quiz, signing in for another student on an attendance sheet or having another student sign in for you, giving a false excuse for failing to show up for an exam, making use of old exams from this course, or taking a copy of an exam from our classroom. Students who assist other students in academically dishonest acts are in violation of the policy of academic honesty. All students must be aware of and carefully adhere to the provisions defining and prohibiting academic misconduct in the UM Student Conduct Code (http://life.umt.edu/vpsa/student_conduct.php). The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense.

Course Outline

The Nature & Extent of Crime

Monday 8/31	What is Criminology? No new readings today
Wednesday 9/2	What is Crime? No new readings today
Friday 9/4	What is Crime? No new readings today
Monday 9/7	No Class: Labor Day
Wednesday 9/9	Measuring & Classifying Crime Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 1
Friday 9/11	Measuring & Classifying Crime Review <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 1
Monday 9/14	Measuring & Classifying Crime Review <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 1
Wednesday 9/16	Victimless Crimes: Prostitution Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 9
Friday 9/18	Victimless Crimes: Illicit Drugs Review <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 9
Monday 9/21	Victimless Crimes: Illicit Drugs Read "How America Lost the War on Drugs"
Wednesday 9/23	Victimless Crimes: Illicit Drugs No new readings today
Friday 9/25	Exam 1 This exam covers the approaches to defining crime, the measurement of crime, and victimless crimes.
Monday 9/28	Violent Crime: Homicide & Aggravated Assault Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 3
Wednesday 9/30	Violent Crime: Rape & Robbery Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapters 4 & 5 and "Federal Rules on Rape Statistics Criticized"
Friday 10/2	Violent Crime: Robbery Read "Creating the Illusion of an Impending Death"
Monday 10/5	Property Crime: Burglary Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 6
Wednesday 10/7	Property Crime: Motor Vehicle Theft Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 7

Friday 10/9	Property Crime: Larceny-Theft Read "The Five Finger Discount"
Monday 10/12	Violent & Property Crime: Conclusion No new readings today
Wednesday 10/14	White-Collar Crime Read <i>Crime Profiles</i> Chapter 8
Friday 10/16	White-Collar Crime: Enron No new readings today
Monday 10/19	White-Collar Crime: Enron No new readings today
Wednesday 10/21	White-Collar Crime: Enron No new readings today
Friday 10/23	Exam 2 This exam covers violent crime, property crime, and white-collar crime.

Causes of Crime

Monday 10/26	Overview Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 1
Wednesday 10/28	Classical Criminology Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 2
Friday 10/30	Biological Theories Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 3
Monday 11/2	Social Disorganization Theory Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 8
Wednesday 11/4	Strain Theories: Classic Strain Theory Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> pp. 173-183
Friday 11/6	Strain Theories: General Strain Theory Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> pp. 183-198
Monday 11/9	Learning Theories Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> Chapter 5
Wednesday 11/11	No Class: Veterans Day
Friday 11/13	Control Theories: Social Control Theory Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> pp. 112-122
Monday 11/16	Control Theories: Self-Control Theory Read <i>Criminological Theories</i> pp. 122-136
Wednesday 11/18	The Costs of the War on Drugs No new readings today
Friday 11/20	The Costs of the War on Drugs No new readings today
Monday 11/23	The Costs of the War on Drugs No new readings today

Wednesday 11/25	No Class: Thanksgiving Break
Friday 11/26	No Class: Thanksgiving Break

Monday 11/30	Review of Criminological Theories No new readings today
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Societal Responses to Crime

Wednesday 12/2	Incarceration in America No new readings today
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Friday 12/4	Criminal Justice Special Topics: The Death Penalty Read "The Use and Abuse of Civil Forfeiture"
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Monday 12/7	Criminal Justice Special Topics: Civil Forfeiture Reading "The Use and Abuse of Civil Forfeiture"
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Wednesday 12/9	Criminal Justice Special Topics: TBA Reading TBA
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Friday 12/11	Criminal Justice Special Topics: TBA Reading TBA
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FINAL EXAM: Thursday, December 17, 8:00 am - 10:00 am, Social Sciences 356
This exam covers criminological theories and the criminal justice system.